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FROM THE COEUR D'ALENE PRESS

Lakes could get prototype classroom

Posted: Monday, Sep 22, 2008 - 10:38:47 pm PDT

By MAUREEN DOLAN

Bryan Martin, maintenance director for the Coeur d'Alene School District, describes his plan for a prototypical classroom at Lakes Middle School Monday during a Long Range Planning Committee meeting.

Could become model for renovation of all other rooms at middle school

COEUR d'ALENE -- The Coeur d'Alene School District is taking baby steps toward remodeling Lakes Middle School.

The district's Long Range Planning Committee voted Monday to recommend the district spend an estimated \$23,000 to remodel one of the middle school's existing 600-square-foot classrooms.

Redesigned with a focus on space maximization, the classroom would be a prototype that could become the model for renovation of all 40 of Lakes Middle School's classrooms.

"We don't want to go out and do a remodel to these classrooms and then find out a year later that it doesn't work," said district maintenance director Bryan Martin. "We want to do it now and give the teachers a few months to work in it. They'll have little things they think can be changed."

Before plans for the prototypical classroom can be implemented, trustees must approve the concept. They will hear a recommendation from the committee at the Oct. 6 school board meeting.

Martin, who first proposed the idea to the planning committee in July, said the worst-case scenario is that the district will have spent \$23,000 and end up with a "really nice classroom."

Constructed in the 1950s, the middle school has 600-square-foot classrooms when the recommended standard is 900 square feet.

Previous long range planning committee recommendations to build a new Lakes Middle School have cited the small classroom size as one of the reasons for a new school.

The work on the model classroom will be done by Martin and his staff so the price is based on materials alone.

If the classroom design works and the district decides to remodel the remaining classrooms at Lakes, outside firms will be hired to complete the work likely doubling the price, Martin said.

Still, the cost of the full project, estimated to come in at just under \$3 million, is substantially less than what it would cost to build a new school.

The funds will come from \$5.1 million the district has set aside for use at Lakes. Those funds include \$4.5 million previously approved by voters in 2002 for use at Lakes plus interest.

The school has been at the center of facilities planning discussions in the district since then when voters approved that levy that included \$7.7 million for renovations at the middle school.

Some of the 2002 levy funds designated for Lakes were used on other projects that came in over budget at the time leaving the district short of cash to do anything at the middle school.

Since then, voters twice rejected multi-million dollar levy proposals that would have raised the additional capital needed to build a new school.

Although the majority of long range planning committee members voted in favor of inching toward a remodel, the committee's vote was not unanimous.

Superintendent Hazel Bauman acknowledged that, but stated her position.

"As your superintendent, I cannot support going back to the community for a rebuild of Lakes now or in the foreseeable future because of what I heard in the community forums, because of the economy and because of the backlog of other projects that need to be done in our district," Bauman said.

FROM THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE MOSCOW PULLMAN DAILY NEWS (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE LEWISTON TRIBUNE (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

No new education news stories posted online today.

FROM THE IDAHO-PRESS TRIBUNE, NAMPA

Lakevue Elementary opens doors

Mike Butts

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Updated 12 hours 30 minutes ago

White doves flew and “dream” balloons floated into the sky at Lakevue Elementary School Monday at the new Vallivue School District facility’s dedication ceremony. The newest and biggest elementary school in the district had several attend its official ribbon cutting, including the mayors of both Nampa and Caldwell. School children sang the new school’s song, and officials spoke about the excitement of opening the district’s sixth elementary facility.

Vallivue dedicates newest elementary school with ceremony

CANYON COUNTY — Hundreds of cheering kids and the fragrance of freshly mulched landscaping greeted those who participated in the Lakevue Elementary School dedication ceremony Monday southeast of Caldwell.

Lakevue Elementary School by the numbers

\$11 million: cost to build

73,554: size of building in square feet

700: student capacity

578: current enrollment

15: acres of property

More Lakevue facts

Lakevue draws from four elementary schools: West Canyon, Central Canyon, East Canyon and Desert Springs

Lakevue’s mascot is the Eagles

The school has a full-size gymnasium with a climbing wall

Vallivue School District broke ground on the school in summer 2007

The school will draw students from both Caldwell and Nampa

Nampa’s Central breaks convention

Lakevue is the biggest of Vallivue School District’s six elementary schools. But it almost didn’t get built on schedule because of the slowdown in the housing market, which made getting infrastructure to the new facility a challenge. The school rises up next to a cornfield south of Karcher Road and east of Lake Avenue.

“This school is going to go down in history as kind of our miracle school,” Vallivue board member Dave Christensen said.

“We were able to overcome some of the bureaucracy that comes with building a school.”

Lakevue has helped ease the crowding at Central Canyon Elementary, which had more than 800 students. It was built using the same floor plan as Birch and Desert Springs elementary schools, but with four extra classrooms for expansion.

“It’s one of the high-growth areas,” Lakevue principal Leeta Hobbs said about the school’s location.

Vallivue School District continues to anticipate growth.

The district has two more sites for future elementary schools, Christensen said: one on Moss Lane in Nampa between Caldwell Boulevard, Karcher Road and Midway Road; the other on Ward Road east of I-84 in Caldwell.

Nampa Police K-9 keeps students safe, drug-free

Alisa Angelakis

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Updated 12 hours 36 minutes ago

NAMPA — Nampa’s newest school resource officer slobbers and pants. But his partner says his personality makes up for it.

“He’s sociable and loving,” Nampa police school resource officer Jacob Peper says about Dutch, a 5-year-old German shorthaired pointer and drug dog.

Dutch is the first police K-9 assigned to work exclusively in Nampa schools and just began his drug-detection training with Peper this month.

Fast facts

Dutch is a five-year-old German shorthaired pointer adopted from the Idaho Humane Society. He recently began his 240 hours of training by the Nampa Police Department and will be certified as a drug detection K-9 through the Idaho Peace Officer Standards and Training Academy.

When Dutch eventually retires, he will most likely remain living with NPD officer Jacob Peper.

Officials plan to improve safety in Idaho schools

Lost boy prompts policy review

Nose for the job

For several years, the Nampa School District has worked closely with the Nampa Police Department to use drug detection dogs in its schools. In the past, however, accessing the trained dogs meant pulling them from other police assignments.

“We appreciate the department investing in this resource for use in our schools,” Paula Kellerer, chief academic officer for the Nampa School District, said. “It compliments our comprehensive

approach to preventing drug abuse through education programs, assistance for children who need help and detection.”

Peper, who has worked at NPD for eight years and a K-9 handler for seven, said he enjoys his new partner, whom he trains at home and on the job.

“How often do you get to take a friend to work with you? He probably gets to be the most petted dog in America.”

Peper said he spends a lot of time building relationships with students, and Dutch helps to bridge the gap between him and some of the children.

“Some kids see law enforcement as an enemy,” he said. “I see a lot of tough kids relax when they see the dogs. The kids really open up and make an instant positive connection with law enforcement.”

Peper said there’s usually a group of children following him and Dutch around during recess. But when Peper gives Dutch a queue, the K-9 officer goes to work.

“The whole time it’s just fun and games to him,” Peper said.

K-9 officers are trained to indicate the location of an illicit drug by sitting down close to the site so they don’t get too close to something that could harm them. Police also look for other changes in the dog’s behavior.

“We don’t search people in the school,” Peper said. “We search objects like lockers and backpacks.”

Peper said as an officer off school grounds, he only searches where he has probable cause to believe drugs are. But schools only need reasonable suspicion to check a student, he said. And lockers are school property.

If a teacher or administrator is concerned, Peper can take Dutch to investigate.

Peper said his goal was to provide a safe, drug-free environment so children can gain a successful education.

“Our main purpose is to provide safety and security in schools,” he said. “Dutch is there to deter any drugs that come into the school. When we do find drugs, I hope to break a cycle so we can fix generations.”

FROM THE IDAHO STATESMAN

Idaho schools awarded grants to bring fresh fruit, vegetables to students

- The Associated Press

Edition Date: 09/23/08

Thirty elementary schools across the state have been awarded grants to bring fresh fruits and vegetables to students.

State Schools Superintendent Tom Luna said the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program provides students with healthier snack options throughout the school day and helps teach students about the importance of healthy eating habits.

Among the schools awarded the grants was Marsing Elementary which received more than \$20,000, Coeur d'Alene's Bryan Elementary which was granted more than \$18,000, and Juliaetta Elementary in north-central Idaho which received more than \$15,000.

FROM THE TWIN FALLS TIMES-NEWS

State evaluating public schools funding

By Ben Botkin

Times-News writer

Before the Legislature gathers in January 2009, the state's Office of Performance Evaluations will look at how the state funds public education.

The office will survey superintendents, principals, teachers and other school officials and put together a study that looks at the adequacy of the state's funding system for public schools. In January, the results of the study will be presented to the Legislature along with recommendations to consider.

Education funding is a frequent source of discussion in the Legislature, but there's no framework in place to put the issue in perspective, said Rakesh Mohan, director of the office.

The state office is in place to look at the efficiency of agencies and programs.

"These questions and issues they come up again and again," he said. "We need to find out what the stakeholders think of the adequacy issue, especially when it comes to allocating funds to school districts."

One goal for the study is to provide lawmakers with information to consider when mapping out the future of education funding in Idaho.

"We are hoping we would be able to come up with a framework that would help policy makers to discuss the adequacy issues," he said. "There is no objective framework out there that people can use to debate the issue."

The study and its recommendations will be broad rather than specific. It will focus on areas such as strengths and weaknesses of the current system instead of providing a new funding formula for public education, Mohan said.

"We are not looking for a magic bullet," he said. "We will not have a nice formula telling what is adequate."

The state's current fiscal woes, which include talk of budget holdbacks, will not impact the study's methods, Mohan said, adding that the study was assigned earlier this year before that became an issue.

The Joint Legislative Oversight Committee had asked the nonpartisan Office of Performance Evaluations in March to study adequacy issues in kindergarten through 12th grade public education funding.

The study's intent is to look at state funding, rather than local funding issues like levies.

Jim Cobble, superintendent of the Jerome School District, said that inadequate state funding can force school districts to be more dependent on supplemental levies. The way he sees it, even though the study isn't looking at local levy issues at the school districts, the state funding - if inadequate - can lead to local levies.

Additionally, state funding for education, while increased, has not kept up pace with inflation, Cobble said.

"It costs more money to operate than a few years ago," he said. "If you're committed to provide a fair, basic educational program and you can't do that with state funding, you're forced to look at other funding sources."

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FROM THE IDAHO STATE JOURNAL (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

ISU prepares contingency plans to trim its budget

BY YANN RANAIVO yranaiwo@journalnet.com

POCATELLO — Idaho State University is preparing to scale back on planned construction projects and other expenses as it awaits for Gov. C.L. “Butch” Otter to make a decision on whether or not to cut future spending in the state’s general fund.

Last week, Otter announced that Idaho’s general fund budget a nearly percent shortfall for fiscal year 2009 and asked all the state agencies and institutions to prepare preliminary holdback plans in the case of a mandatory reduction in spending.

James Fletcher, ISU’s vice president of finance, said ISU was last forced to do a holdback in 2004, and anticipates the university will cut as much as \$1.8 million in fiscal year 2009 spending under the worst-case scenario.

Otter, who has given agencies until Wednesday to submit the reviews, outlined three different plans that would mandate 1, 2 or 2.5 percent cuts in the agencies’ spending. He told the agencies to provide spending budgets that would be most affected by a mandatory cut.

ISU has prepared to cut spending from both its ongoing general expenses and a small special equipment budget, which the state Legislature funds annually to allow for purchasing of equipment such as new computers.

Some general expenses for ISU include construction, travel plans, meals for the university and utilities.

The Legislature provided nearly \$2 million for ISU’s special equipment budget, and the state allocated about \$74.4 million for the university’s general ongoing expenses last year.

Under the three holdback plans, ISU could cut back \$744,200 under the 1 percent target, \$1.4 million with 2 percent or \$1.8 million if it was 2.5 percent.

Fletcher said the governor asked the agencies and institutions to provide ongoing expense budgets to also plan ahead for upcoming years when the economy is expected to be sour.

He said fortunately ISU anticipated the nation’s declining economy earlier this year and made provisions allowing the university to prepare for cuts on nonpersonnel spending. Fletcher said it took both the state’s special equipment and ongoing general expense funds, and withheld them from ISU’s departments until the university had adequate time to see how the economy progressed.

“We saw (the special equipment) fund as being a potential provision. So, we didn’t distribute it yet,” he said.

Fletcher likened the move to putting money in a personal savings account and referred to his time working for International Business Machine, a company that he said has usually survived difficult economic times largely by cutting nonpersonnel expenses. He said cutting personnel, which could have been ISU’s next move, would have been “chaotic.”

Fletcher said Otter may not even announce an executive order to cut spending.

“The important thing is that the governor is assessing the holdback,” he said.

Local teens take a day to learn about city government

BY YANN RANAIVO yranaiivo@journalnet.com

POCATELLO — Until Monday, Alyson Gigger didn’t realize that Mayor Roger Chase could personally address formal complaints from locals about such nuisances as an unfair utility bill.

“It surprised me a little,” Gigger said Monday during the annual Youth In Government day.

The 16-year-old Century High School junior also learned a few more details about the workings of city government during the daylong event.

Youth In Government Day, which is regularly held during the fall semester, excuses Pocatello high school students from classes for one day, and allows them to tour various city departments.

The students are chosen from the Pocatello Youth Forum, which is a local advisory board comprising 20 local high school students and two adult counselors.

Gigger, though, only took part in the afternoon portion of Youth In Government, which allowed her to visit with City Hall and mayoral office assistants.

Veronica Miller, a 16-year-old junior at Century, was able to visit both City Hall and Pocatello's Engineering Department.

Miller said she had the opportunity to visit a local water tank in Pocatello and spoke with some land surveyors and civil engineers.

She also had lunch with City Councilman Brian Underwood, who she learned did not finish college and had previously been in the Idaho Legislature. Miller said Underwood told her about a local overpass project near the Indian Hills Elementary School.

"I learned exactly what (City Council members and the Engineering Department) do," Miller said.

FROM THE IDAHO FALLS POST REGISTER (PASSWORD REQUIRED)

Stars in the making

School drama club puts kids in spotlight

By CLARK CORBIN ccorbin@postregister.com

Cooper Williams' mom always bet he could be a star. Now the Ammon Elementary School fourth-grader is working hard so he can prove her right.

Cooper and 35 other fourth- through sixth-grade students participate in an extracurricular acting and drama club at the school.

The students spend time learning about how facial expressions and body language convey meaning, practicing projecting their voices and improvising situations the club's teachers dream up.

"So far, I think it's really fun," Cooper said. "I just love acting."

By the end of the school year, the students will gain public speaking experience, meet new friends and understand the basics of theater. But the kicker, that part of participating that has left the students wide-eyed and giggling after only a few short weeks, is performing. The students plan to put on two shows, the first of which is a Christmas musical slated to premiere the week before Thanksgiving.

"This is your chance to show yourself, to get up on that stage," teacher Rebecca Dall told the students.

Earlier this month, the students began developing acting skills playing a theater game that forced them to respond to one another only in questions.

So, how'd the kids like it?

Why don't we ask them?

"They're hard, but they're fun," Haley Smith said. "It's fun when Mrs. Dall thinks up new things and things she learned for us."

Many of the students in the club participated last year, but some of the new students were hooked their first day. Fourth-grader Teigan Tolman enjoyed his introduction to drama so much that he isn't quite ready to rule out a career as an actor.

"It's great to learn, because you never know what you could be when you grow up," Teigan said.

And he might not be the only one pursuing acting either. Cooper's biggest fan convinced him to sign up for the club and explore the stage.

"I signed up because my mom's always telling me I'm a great actor," Cooper said.

If you go The Ammon Elementary Drama Club presents "The Christmas Craze" at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 21 and Nov. 22 at the school, 2900 Central Ave.